Minutes of the meeting of the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council held at the Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke on Thursday 22 October 2015 at 18:30

Members of the Council in attendance:
The Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Mrs A Court and the following Councillors:-

Miss R Bean, M Bound, S Bound, Mrs J Bowyer, Mrs R Burgess, J Cousens, Mrs O Cubitt, S Day, E Dunlop, Miss H Eachus, Miss L Edwards, G Falconer, Mrs J Frankum, P Frankum, S Frost, R Gardiner, S Godesen, Miss H Golding, R Golding, P Harvey, G Hood, R Hussey, J Izett, Ms L James, G James, Mrs P Lonie, J Leek, D Leeks, P Miller, R Musson, Mrs C Osselton, S Parker, C Phillimore, N Pierce, C Pinder, D Potter, D Putty, C Regan, Mrs T Reid, J Richards, N Robinson, M Ruffell, C Sanders, D Sherlock, J Smith, Mrs E Still, R Tate, Mrs D Taylor, M Taylor, I Tilbury, C Tomblin, Mrs M Tucker, Ms V Washbourne, G Watts, K Watts, M Westbrook

Apologies for Absence:
Councillors T Jones, S Keating

29/15 Declarations of Interest [Item 2]

1) The Chief Executive declared an interest on behalf of officers regarding agenda item 8 (3), pay structure proposal and agenda item 11 (1), critical treatment hospital, on behalf of Karen Brimacombe. The officers concerned left the room for those items.

2) Councillor Mrs Reid declared an interest in relation to agenda item 9 (2), the housing motion, due to being a landlord.

3) Councillor Miss Golding declared a pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item 9(1), County Council cuts motion due, to her employment.

4) Councillor Miss Eachus declared an interest in relation to Basingstoke Town Football Club.

30/15 Minutes [Item 3]

The Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 16 July 2015 and the extraordinary meeting held on 1 September 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

31/15 Announcements [Item 4]

1) The Mayor made a number of announcements:

a) The Mayoress had given birth to baby Alex on 15th August and Mel O'Sullivan from Legal had baby Jake on 28th September.

b) There would be a bucket collection at the end of the council meeting for the Mayor's Charity Week.
c) Basingstoke Choirs would be singing in Festival Place on 5 December in aid of the Mayor’s Charity Appeal

d) A Carol Service would be held on 12 December at 7pm at St Michael’s Church.

e) After 11 years’ service it was Karen Brimacombe’s last council meeting before taking up her new role as Director of Operations at Basingstoke Hospital. She was wished all the best for the future.

f) John Coughlan had been appointed as the new Chief Executive at Hampshire County Council.

2) The Leader of the Council updated Council on the progress of the devolution deal, stating that a lot of work had been undertaken to develop the proposals from the devolution prospectus. The next step in the process would be a challenge session with the Secretary of State and a group of representatives from the county, districts and unitary authorities.

32/15 Questions from members of the public [Item 5]

The following questions were asked from members of the public and responded to by the relevant Cabinet Member:

1) Tina Taplin

With regards to the possibility of a devolution deal, I would like to ask about the option of having an elected mayor for Basingstoke.

The Leader of the Council responded to the question stating that there was unlikely to be a proposal for an elected Mayor.

2) Debbie Reavell, Secretary of Basingstoke Heritage Society

The council is asked to approve a recommendation from Cabinet (28th July), which seeks to except a piece of land – the Old Common – from the list of protected sites, when this particular site was clearly already protected by an extant council resolution of 1 March 1979. That resolution, referring precisely to the piece of land which is under negotiation with the BTFC was to keep the land “undeveloped and of an open character” and was a response to the need to keep open space in the fast-growing central town area.

I ask Cllr Sanders by what authority does the council propose to override the clearly stated 1979 resolution, made by the then council for the benefit of the townspeople? Would he not agree that the need for public open space is greater now than ever, particularly when you are aware that there are currently 1400 small units of housing in development within the ringway?

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure responded to the question stating that he fully supported those that wished to preserve the town’s heritage. With respect to the Old Common this council could not protect land from future councils decisions, likewise past decisions could not prevent this council from making decisions. No protection was afforded in
1979 to Old Common. He further added that he had listened to the concerns of residents and would be speaking on the parks and open spaces motion (agenda item 8 (1)).

A supplementary question was asked; ‘who has the authority to override the council decision of 1979? A response was given that it depended on who made the decision at the time either Cabinet or Council.

3) Helen Richards

Firstly I want to say I fully support the Council’s intention to protect Basingstoke and Deane’s Parks and Open Spaces from development. However, I do not support the exclusion of the Old Common from protection.

Please bear in mind that at the time the Old Common was apparently offered to Basingstoke Town Football Club as a possible site for their new stadium, there had been no opportunity for Call In by local Councillors, nor had a full and transparent Public Consultation taken place to ascertain the level of public support for losing this site which has been in public use since the Middle Ages.

Cabinet members now seem to fear that “legitimate expectations” of third parties could lead to litigation if the Old Common were to be given the same protection that this new policy will give to other open spaces.

Therefore my question to the full Council is simply this:

If the Old Common was indeed offered by Council members to the Football Club, do you all consider that this offer was made with due regard to the wishes of the residents of Basingstoke?

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure responded stating that all parks and open spaces in the borough were protected through planning policy, decision making and scrutiny. He stated that whilst he fully understood the concerns raised there was no contractually binding agreement in place and he had listened to the genuine concerns of residents who benefit from the Old Common as open space and that its status would be revisited.

33/15 Petitions [Item 6]

No petitions were received.

34/15 Resignations and Appointments [Item 7]

The following resignations and appointments were made:

1) Councillor Mrs Bowyer is replaced by Councillor Mrs Reid as a reserve member of the Licensing Committee.

2) That Councillor Mrs Bowyer is appointed to the Crime and Disorder Joint Scrutiny Committee.
3) That Councillors Mrs Still and Gardiner are appointed to the North Hampshire Area Road Safety Council.

35/15 Reports for Decision [Item 8]

1) Parks, Open Spaces and Playing Fields

RESOLVED: That Council refers the recommendation back to Cabinet for reconsideration.

2) Review of Standards Arrangements for dealing with Complaints.

The Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee put the recommendation to council to adopt the revised arrangements for dealing with complaints.

Some concerns were raised during debate regarding the language used with reference to sanctions (paragraph 6.8 of the report) and some members felt that there was a conflict between the functions of a councillor and the sanctions. Other Members however felt that it was right to have sanctions and that they would only be used in serious circumstances.

Councillor Harvey proposed that the arrangements for dealing with complaints be referred back to the Standards Committee for review, however following a vote, the proposal was rejected.

RESOLVED: That Council

1) Adopts the arrangements for dealing with complaints at the revised Appendix 2 of the report and;

2) Authorisation is given to the Monitoring officer to make minor amendments to the arrangements to ensure that they remain an effective working document with all amendments notified to all councillors.

3) Appoints the independent members as specified below:

   Keith Bastin – appointed until 22 October 2017
   Chris Evans – appointed until 22 October 2017
   Peter Moore – appointed until 22 October 2019
   Elizabeth Morris – appointed until 22 October 2019

4) Appoints the independent persons as specified below:

   Sian Campbell – appointed until 22 October 2017
   Chris Eele – appointed until 22 October 2019
   Judith Curson – appointed until 22 October 2019

3) Pay Structure Proposal

The Chairman of the Human Resources Committee summarised the rationale behind the recommendation to introduce a new Grade 14 to the pay structure stating that the borough had major development projects and the creation of a new grade between Head of Service and Director grades
would facilitate permanent recruitment and retention of postholders to those roles which would provide long term commitment to the success of the projects and the borough.

**RESOLVED:** That Council approves a revised Pay Policy Statement incorporating the new Grade 14 and consequential amendments to the Director and Chief Executive grades.

4) **Statutory Appointments – Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer**

**RESOLVED:** That Laura Taylor, Executive Director of Borough Development is appointed as the Returning officer and Electoral Registration Officer with immediate effect.

36/15 **Notices of Motions** [Item 9]

1) **County Council Cuts**

The following motion was moved by Councillor Cousens and seconded by Councillor Potter:

1. Hampshire County Council’s Cabinet has just announced £100million of cuts affecting people in Basingstoke & Deane and across the County.

2. These cuts range from the near decimation of local Children's Centres, cutting from 54 centres to no more than 15 throughout the County; to outsourcing the school transport escorts service; changes to social work whereby volunteers will be used to provide advocacy and support to children on the edge of care; through to service changes for children with disabilities.

3. Council resolves to oppose these cuts that affect people in Basingstoke & Deane and:

   • requests the Leader to communicate to the Leader of Hampshire County Council this Council's opposition to them.

   • requests officers to investigate the impact of these cuts to people in Basingstoke & Deane and to report to the next relevant committee meeting in order that the true impact of these cuts to the Borough's residents can be understood.

During debate a number of comments were raised both in support and against the motion. Some members felt that the motion was premature as the proposals from HCC were subject to change through a consultation process and once the full impact of the proposals were known, officers could investigate and respond. Other members however felt that it was a sensible option to understand the impact of any cuts now in order to have the opportunity to discuss the impact at committee and make a worthwhile contribution to HCC now.

The motion was put to a vote with 24 votes in favour, 31 against and 1 abstention.
RESOLVED: The Motion is rejected.

2) The Growing Housing Crisis

Councillor Harvey moved and Councillor Regan seconded the following motion:

Council acknowledges that the Borough faces a growing housing crisis.

Homeownership in Basingstoke & Deane has reduced. The number of Affordable Houses delivered has fallen. There has been a significant expansion of the private rented sector that is now reluctant to take tenants on housing benefit.

For thousands of people in our Borough mortgages and rents are unaffordable and beyond their means. For those with mortgages and/or rents many are struggling to pay and face arrears and debt issues.

This Council resolves to establish a new partnership, bringing together private developers, social landlords, landowners, and the County Council, alongside other relevant agencies and organisations to directly focus on what housing is built in Basingstoke & Deane. The aim is to work cross party and with partners, using the evidence available to drive the delivery of housing that specifically meets the needs and aspirations of the people of our Borough.

Members discussed the motion and the issues around the lack of affordable housing in the borough such as high private rental costs, reduced levels of home ownership, decrease in social housing stock, the impact on homelessness, the benefit cap and its impact on housing associations and the need to understand the social issues in the borough and how to work with partners to address those issues.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration updated members on the progress of work currently underway to deal with housing issues by looking at different business models and cross cutting ways of working. She added that work was being brought forward to look at a new Housing Strategy and hoped that there would be cross party support and involvement. She further added that the strategy would look at areas that had not been explored before such as a First Time Buyers Register and that other innovative models and best practice from other authorities would be explored. She therefore felt that although the motion was well intended, the progress of work already being done was more advanced than requested in the motion.

The motion was put to the vote with 24 votes in favour and 31 votes against.

RESOLVED: That the Motion is rejected.

3) Refugee Crisis

Councillor G James moved, and Councillor Parker seconded the following motion:
Council Notes

1. Conflicts in the Middle East have created the largest refugee crisis in generations. Thousands of people have died while seeking sanctuary from the violence.

2. An estimated 9 million Syrians have fled their homes since the outbreak of civil war in March 2011, taking refuge in neighbouring countries or within Syria itself. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 3 million have fled to Syria's immediate neighbours Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. 6.5 million are internally displaced within Syria.

3. Prime Minister David Cameron has announced that Britain would resettle up to 20,000 refugees over the next four-and-a-half years

4. Thousands of Hampshire residents have already stepped forward to help those in need by donating items that will be sent to some of the refugees who have been forced to leave their homeland.

5. The Leader of Hampshire County Council has said "Naturally, if Hampshire County Council is called upon by the Government to offer help during this crisis, we will do all we reasonably can to provide support and assistance, because morally it's the right thing to do."

Council Believes

1. That people in Basingstoke and Deane have been moved by the plight of men, women and children trying to survive. The people of Basingstoke and Deane are generous and warm-hearted and will not stand by and watch fellow human beings needlessly suffer when there is action we can take. It is a matter of human compassion that we do what we can to help refugees.

Council Resolves:

1. To request the Cabinet works with colleagues at Hampshire County Council to co-ordinate how refugees can be helped and explore the opportunities for foster care for some of those orphaned by the conflict.

2. Seek to establish, working with community group, faith groups and churches, a system to assist households who can provide rooms/accommodation for refugees within their own homes.

3. Designate a specialist refugee officer to lead these efforts

4. Write to the Prime Minister to assure him that Basingstoke and Deane stands ready and willing to help at this time of international crisis and continue with the long standing British tradition of helping refugees.

In debating the motion, a majority of members fully supported the motion. Comments were made regarding the support given to refugees not only in terms of housing but to help them integrate into the local area, access local
services and assist with language barriers. Some members felt that there needed to be a balance between supporting refugees and vulnerable people in the borough.

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Service Delivery and Improvement provided an update to members on the work that was being undertaken to provide support to refugees in an organised and structured manner. He stated that officers were working with community groups and in partnership with HCC to develop responses to be submitted to the Local Government Association Strategic Migration Partnership which had been set up to co-ordinate and offer assistance to local authorities in the south east. He also stated that indications were that the number of children who required foster care was expected to be low and that support would be given through a national scheme. Two officers were providing refuge support however it was not clear what the future level of support would be required for a designated officer.

The motion was put to a vote with 53 votes in favour and 2 votes against.

**RESOLVED:** The Motion is referred to the Cabinet for its consideration.

37/15  **To receive the minutes of the following meetings** [Item 10]

The minutes of the following meetings were noted:

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<th>Committee</th>
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<td>Licensing</td>
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<td>Development Control</td>
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<td>Scrutiny</td>
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<td>Basing View Executive Meeting</td>
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<td>Cabinet</td>
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<td>5820 - 5826</td>
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With reference to the minutes of the Audit and Accounts Committee held on 21 September 2015 (Minute 24/15), Councillor Parker asked whether the Chairman of the Audit and Accounts Committee would ensure that the resolution regarding ethical principles was progressed.

The Chairman of the committee responded and confirmed that he would.

38/15 **Questions from Members of the Council on notice** [Item 11]

The following questions were put to members of the Cabinet:

1) From: Councillor Gardiner  
   To: The Leader of the Council

**Question**

In light of planning permission being granted last week for the new Critical Treatment Hospital in Basingstoke, alongside the concerns expressed by the CCG, could the Leader please detail what contacts have been made with both parties in order to plan a way forward.

**Answer**

I have made contact with the CCG following its announcement on the 23 September 2015 that the governing body recommended that the new Critical Treatment Hospital should not be put forward for consultation. I wrote to the accountable officer of the North Hampshire CCG to ask whether any decision on this subject could be deferred until such time as we have had the opportunity to have a dialogue as up until this stage there had been no dialogue on this subject. Unfortunately they decided that because they wanted to get on with it, there wasn’t time and they would have to make a decision which is surprising since they have had about 3 years beforehand to make a decision on this subject. I did ask them to come and see me and I have been to see the hospital to get their view on this because whilst we as a local authority have no role to play in the administration of the health service or making clinical decisions on subjects, I think we have a genuine role to play in representing the views of our residents and making sure that the interest of residents is taken into account by other public bodies. Both groups did come to see me and the hospital continued to make it clear that they thought the way forward was to have a critical health centre was exactly the right way to go and that they wish to proceed to consultation as quickly as possible. The CCG made it clear there were a lot of questions still unanswered, that it was necessary to review the whole question both of the clinical viability of a centralised care for critical issues and also to look at the longer term structure of health care provision in the north of Hampshire and mid Hampshire and in the light of impending pressures on their budgets over the next 5 years. I found that a very unsatisfactory answer as what have they been doing for the last 3 years. Nothing radically has changed of late, they should have come to these conclusions sooner than now and I find it equally disturbing that we have two different arms of one organisation, the NHS who apparently seem not to talk to one another. I think that is letting us as residents and perspective patients down. We had some discussions on what potential there might be around opportunities for centralisation to carry on regardless while they were looking at the longer term issues of care. It is not really possible to disassociate the two, again an argument that I do not fully understand.
and does not seem to be supported by the point of view put forward by the hospital. There was some mention of centralising in a decentralised way which means centralising certain bits of care for certain subjects in certain places which already exists. I urged them to recognise that we as residents expect to see action sooner rather than later, we expect to see better decision making and we expect to see us involved in the process in the future.

2) From: Councillor K Watts
   To: The Cabinet Member for Partnerships

Question

Will you join me in congratulating the Trustees of 200 year old Whitchurch Silk Mill for obtaining a development grant of £123,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for professional support in the preparation of a full application for a further grant to enable the refurbishment and enhancement of the Silk Mill as a self-sustaining, living industrial heritage site for many years to come?

Answer

I am absolutely delighted that the Heritage Fund has given £123,300 to Whitchurch Silk Mill. I realise that it does allow you to go forward with what you are about to do, there is a second tranche to come forward but I look forward to seeing the actual machinery and the refurbishment of the Silk Mill. Please give my congratulations to the trust and to Sue Taplis for their hard work because it is not easy getting these grants and I think we need to preserve the Silk Mill and its heritage. Apprentices will also be employed in the Silk Mill as well.

3) From: Councillor K Watts
   To: The Leader of the Council

Question

Will you join me in congratulating the Trustees of the Whitchurch Association for obtaining “Walkers are Welcome” accreditation for the area, part of a low-impact green tourism initiative promoting public transport with the backing of Stagecoach and South West Trains?

Answer

Walkers are Welcome is a non-profit making ‘Community Interest Company’. This is a nationwide initiative that was launched in 2007 to encourage towns and villages to be ‘welcoming to walkers’. The network has expanded rapidly and there are now over 100 locations across the UK that have joined this community led scheme to benefit from Walkers are Welcome accreditation.

They aim to promote towns and villages to –

- be attractive destinations for walkers with top quality information on local walks
- offer local people and visitors excellent walking opportunities within their areas
- ensure that footpaths and facilities for walkers are maintained, improved and well signposted
Council – 22 October 2015

- contribute to local tourism plans and regeneration strategies
- promote the health benefits of walking and increase participation
- encourage the use of public transport

The benefit of that is that it should and does:

- attract more people to visit the town to enjoy local walks
- economic benefit for local shops, B&B's, hotels, pubs, cafes, restaurants thorough increased footfall
- strengthens towns reputation as a walking destination when signposted walks/walking guides are available
- promotes local visitor attractions
- compliments towns economic generation/tourism plans and strategies

Walkers are Welcome say about Whitchurch:

‘Whitchurch is a small town and always seeks to provide a warm welcome to visitors wishing to explore this lesser known part of Hampshire. Whitchurch has a variety of walks to suit all interests and abilities; from the gentle river landscape or pristine waters and water meadows with their abundant flora and fauna, to the footpaths of the chalk downs where the colours, sounds and shadows change with every season. Much of the charming town is a conservation area’.

I think it is a very good initiative and am pleased that local people have taken the time and made the effort to gain this accreditation and I am sure there are other places within the borough that could also do something similar.

The meeting ended at 21:00

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Mayor